



Fitzgerald AUTO MALLS
FitzMall.com Always Low Price Since 1966

Click here to visit FitzMall.com

SEE OVER 20 BRANDS
OF NEW CARS & TRUCKS
ALL AT ROCK BOTTOM
NO HAGGLE PRICES!



COUPON SAVINGS

CLICK HERE for Exclusive Coupon SAVINGS

Gazette.Net

Maryland Community Newspapers Online

 Now 72°
  Fri 84°/66°
  Sat 86°/65°
  5-day forecast
  Traffic

[Advanced Search](#)

[News & Opinion](#) |
 [Sports](#) |
 [Entertainment](#) |
 [Calendar](#) |
 [Jobs](#) |
 [Autos](#) |
 [Homes](#) |
 [Classifieds](#) |
 [Contact Us](#) |
 [Help](#)

News by Community

Sports by Community

Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Berliner engages in town hall 'conversations' with residents

Meeting draws Bethesda, Potomac constituents to voice concerns to District 1 councilman

by Erin Donaghue | Staff Writer

[E-mail this article](#) |
 [Print this article](#)

More News

[From 'Shakedown Street' to Old Town National Labor College graduates more than 100 Berliner's 'conversations' answer constituents' queries](#)
[Humane society struggles to maintain pet cemetery](#)
[Lakelands middle gets new principal](#)



Follow Gazette reporters at the AT&T National right now on Twitter.



The Gazette
Gazette.Net

Montgomery County Council Vice President Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Potomac has gotten speed camera tickets, too. And yes, he still supports the cameras, which he says force drivers to slow down.

Berliner's admission was met with some giggles at the Potomac Library Monday night during the latest installment of Berliner's "Conversations," a town-hall style meeting in which Berliner invites his constituents to come to him with their concerns. The meetings are one way that Berliner can maintain open communication with people he represents — residents of the Bethesda, Potomac and Chevy Chase areas — about whatever might be on their mind.

Monday, it was speed cameras. The meeting opened with a firing off of complaints about the devices, which automatically ticket drivers going 11 miles-per-hour or more over the speed limit. At the meeting, some constituents described them as ubiquitous and intrusive.

Berliner said he himself had been ticketed by cameras at Oaklyn Drive and Seven Locks Road. "I've gotten my share, and I will tell you, I think speed cameras are OK," Berliner said. A lengthy process goes into determining where speed cameras should be located, Berliner said, and they have been proven to promote traffic safety.

Even when tackling one of the most divisive issues in the county, Berliner presents himself as a person who hopes to bring consensus and promote civil discourse. And the "Conversations" meetings are all about getting people talking, he said.

"I think meetings of that nature are essential," Berliner said. The meetings, he said, "give an opportunity for people who don't otherwise have a chance to participate in council business to share the things on their mind."


Monday, constituent concerns ran the gamut from keeping school modernization projects on track to repaving roads in a small Bethesda neighborhood to the potential impacts of the planned redevelopment of the White Flint area. The White Flint Sector Plan, a new 30 year master plan currently being hashed out for the area surrounding the White Flint Metro,



Naomi Brookner/The Gazette
 Montgomery County Council Vice President Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Potomac responded to issues including county growth and school construction at "Conversations," a town hall-style meeting he hosted at the Potomac Library on Monday evening.



Follow Gazette reporters at the AT&T National right now on Twitter.



FEATURED JOBS

Build Your Income
 If you aspire to be successful and improve your lifestyle, and are willing [More](#)
Research Bilingual Data
 Collectors DAY/EVENING/WEEKEND WESTAT is a social science [More](#)
Clerical At Route
 118 and Aircraft Dr. Germantown. PART TIME OFFICE MANAGER Experience a must [More](#)
Real Estate Silver
 Spring WORK WITH THE BEST Be trained individually by one of the [More](#)

[See All Featured Ads](#)


Montgomery College
 Workforce Development & Continuing Education

Register for the Pre-College Arts Institute

TOP JOBS

ST. MARGARET'S EARLY LEARNING CENTER Seeking PT Director, BS/BA Degree, 3 [More](#)

COORDINATOR One-Year Full time AmeriCorps position with Volunteer Maryland. Organize volunteers [More](#)

[See All Featured Ads](#)

SPECIALS

Spring has Sprung

SEARCH DIRECTORIES

[Search all directories](#)

Place a classifieds ad now

WEEKLY SPECIALS

THE GAZETTE'S YARD SALE SECTION
 IS SPONSORED BY 1800gotjunk.com [More](#)
NURSING ASSISTANT CNA Certified 3 years experienced in working with the... [More](#)
POTOMAC MOVING SALE Sat & Sun, 7/4 & 7/5, 10am - 3pm 8801... [More](#)

[See All Featured Ads](#)

aims to redesign the Rockville Pike into a walkable boulevard.

"Our local community is going to really take a toll if it isn't planned well," said North Bethesda resident Ellen Paul, who attended the meeting. She cited concerns with increased traffic and overcrowded schools.

Though growth issues have been on the table now for decades now, Berliner told The Gazette, the county is at a "critical juncture" when it comes to the debate. With issues like White Flint now on the front burner, at the meeting Berliner renewed his commitment to promote public transportation and walkable communities in an effort to get cars off the road.

A renowned energy lawyer, Berliner hopes he is most recognizable as a council member for his role with promoting environmental awareness. In 2008, the council passed a series of environmental initiatives championed by Berliner aimed to reduce carbon emissions in the county. Berliner also serves on the Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee, and led the charge for a low-interest loan program that will allow homeowners to make energy-efficient improvements to their homes.

For Paul, the meeting was a way to get up to speed with issues of importance in the community. "You feel like you have more involvement and more ownership over your little world if you can stay apprised of what's going on," Paul said.

Potomac resident Merry Eisner, a past president of the Bells Mill PTA and a longtime schools advocate, has attended several of Berliner's meetings and said the gatherings are now drawing people outside the core groups of local civic activists who usually attend.


"I was impressed with the number of people there who I didn't recognize," Eisner said. "I think it was a good mix of people with a wide variety of issues."

The meetings, Eisner said, make Berliner more accessible to a wide variety of constituents.

"People aren't there to say, "Everything's wonderful," Berliner said. "They're there to share what's on their mind. From my perspective it's an important opportunity to hear directly and to respond directly and to engage in literally a conversation about these issues."


The next "Conversations" event is planned for September, though the location and date have yet to be determined.

Office Space for Lease
NEW HAMPSHIRE BUSINESS CENTER
 6475-95 New Hampshire Avenue
 Hyattsville, Maryland
On-Site Leasing Office
 301-270-4400



Features

- Free surface & covered parking at 3.5 spaces per 1,000 s.f. leased
- Conveniently located on-half mile from DC
- Takoma park Red Line & Prince George's Plaza Green Line nearby
- Come join our ever expanding facilities
- Close to several major area hospitals
- Executive offices & suites from 325 to 12,000 s.f.
- Flexible lease terms & competitive rent
- All Brokers Welcome



For more information
 Leslie Lloyd-Homes
 lhomes@blakereal.com
 301.270.4400

RESOURCES

[About us](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Gazette jobs](#)

[Nonprofits](#)

Montgomery
 Frederick
 Prince George's